

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02496 181155Z
ACTION COME-00

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P R 181131Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1382
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 2496

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: USINJC, BEXP, BGEN,IN
SUBJECT: NEW FICCI PRESIDENT

1. BADRI PRASAD PODDAR, A CALCUTTA BASED
INDUSTRIALIST HAS BEEN FORMALLY DESIGNATED PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSRY (FICCI) FOR
IFY 1977-78. HE WILL EFFETIVELY TAKE OVER AS THE FICCI PRESIDENT
FROM M.A. ARUNACHALAM AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF FICCI WHICH IS
TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR MID-APRIL. AS PRESIDENT OF FICCI,
WHICH HAS ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATING AND SUP-
PORTING THE INDIAN SECTION OF THE INDO-US JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL,
PODDAR WILL AUTOMATICALLY BECOME CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN
SECTION FOR A ONE-YEAR PERIOD. K.K. BIRLA REMAINS CHAIRMAN.

2. PODDAR, 57, IS A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN AND IND-
USTRIALIST OF EASTERN INDIA WITH MANY OF HIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS
BRITISH ORIENTED. HE IS ON THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF SUCH LEADING
BRITISH SUBSIDIARIES AND AFFILIATES AS ENGLISH ELECTRIC;
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY; CALCUTTA TRAMWAYS COMPANY; AND SHAW
WALLACE AND COMPANY LIMITED. IN ADDITION, PODDAR HAS SUBSTANTIAL
PERSONAL BUSINESS INTERESTS IN MANUFACTURING, STARCHES, JUTE,
CHEMICALS AND UNTIL RECENTLY, IN COAL MINING. HE HAS NO DIRECT
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U.S. BUSINESS AFFILIATION. HE IS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE
BHARAT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA, AND IS CURRENTLY THE GOI
NOMINEE ON THE NATIONAL SHIPPING BOARD AND THE EMPLOYEES' STATE
PROVIDENT FUND.

3. COMMENT: PODDAR IS MORE POLITICALLY ORIENTED THAN ARUNA-
CHALAM. HE IS AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF THE RULING CONGRESS PARTY

AND WAS FOR 15 YEARS A MEMBER OF ITS GENERAL COUNCIL (ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE). HE WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE WEST BENGAL STATE LEGISLAURE FOR ABOUT 11 YEARS. PODDAR IS NOT AS ARTICULATE A SPOKESMAN FOR BUSINESS AS ARUNACHALAM BUT HIS POLITICAL CONNECTIONS MAY GIVE FICCI GREATER CLOUT WITH THE GOI.SCHNEIDER

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TAGS: BEXP, BGEN, IN, USINJC
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